

The control cycle and the perfective/imperfective contrast in Polish

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Aim:

- to consider a number of diverse uses of the perfective and the imperfective in Polish (pertaining to non-past events)
- to make an attempt at offering a preliminary unified analysis of those diverse uses

Background:

Polish is a Slavic language exhibiting the perfective/imperfective aspectual contrast

this contrast is manifested in the Polish verbal lexicon: verbal lexemes come in groups of morphologically related items which are either perfective or imperfective

as a result, not only tensed, but also non-tensed verbal categories exhibit the perfective/imperfective contrast

Initial characterization:

- perfective: process viewed in its entirety (cf. Dahl 1981:82)
- imperfective: process viewed as ongoing (cf. Dahl 1981:82)

Data kinds:

perfectives and imperfectives in the non-past indicative (statement uses)
(cf. Kocharńska 2002)

perfectives and imperfectives in the imperative (directive uses)
(cf. Kocharńska 2015 and 2018)

mainly examples profiling a completed single instance of the relevant process

cases where the imperfective does not exhibit its prototypical meaning

Theoretical framework:

theory of cognitive grammar (e.g. Langacker 1987; 1991; 2008; 2009)

grounding: a semantic function of establishing some relation between the profiled entity and the **ground** (the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances (cf. Langacker 2002a:7)

grounding establishes a basic connection between the interlocutors and the content evoked by a nominal or a finite clause. If left ungrounded, this content has no discernible position in their mental universe and cannot be brought to bear on their situation. It simply floats unattached as an object of idle contemplation.

Langacker (2008:259)

clausal grounding: establishes a relation between the profiled process and the ground with respect to issues such as time, reality, etc.

epistemic grounding: has to do with epistemic control, that is, with situating the profiled process in relation to the conceptualizer's idea of reality (cf. Langacker 2008:474:296–309; see also Langacker 2002b:207)

effective grounding: has to do with effective control, that is, with “the effort to *influence* what happens” (Langacker 2009:164)

➤ non-past indicative perfectives and imperfectives in statement uses

- (1) *Sam pojade*_{1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. PERF.} *jutro na lotnisko.* (NCP)
'I will drive to the airport tomorrow by myself.'

perfective: process viewed in its entirety (cf. Dahl 1981:82)
future-time meaning

- (2) *Basiu*_{VOC.}, *jade*_{1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. IMPERF.} *teraz do klubu.* (NCP)
'Basia, I'm driving to the club now.'

context: the speaker is driving through the streets of Warsaw and talking to the hearer through a mobile phone

imperfective: process viewed as ongoing (cf. Dahl 1981:82)
present-time meaning

Polish does not have two separate tense predications to locate an event temporally in the present or in the future

instead, there is just a single non-past tense predication and locating the profiled process in time is achieved via selecting either the perfective or the imperfective aspect

locating the profiled process in time is a basic manifestation of grounding

hence, the choice of either the perfective or the imperfective aspect in the non-past tense has a grounding function in Polish

perfective: grounds the profiled process as temporally non-immediate to the conceptualizer (future)

imperfective: grounds the profiled process as temporally immediate to the conceptualizer (present)

not all uses of the non-past imperfective have the present-time meaning

(3) *Jeśli rozwiążę tę sprawę, **pójdę**_{1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. PERF.} na zasłużoną emeryturę.* (NCP)

‘If I solve this case, **I’ll go** into [my] well-deserved retirement’

(4) *Za kilka miesięcy **idę**_{1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. IMPERF.} na emeryturę.* (NCP)

‘In a few months **I’m going** into [my] retirement’

certain uses of the non-past indicative imperfective refer to future-time processes, just like their perfective counterparts

- (3) *Jeśli rozwiążę tę sprawę, pójde*_{ę1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. PERF.} *na zasłużoną emeryturę.* (NCP)
'If I solve this case, I'll go into [my] well-deserved retirement'

the profiled future event conceptualized as contingent upon the potential future occurrence of another future event

a potentiality which may but does not have to turn into reality (epistemically uncertain)

- (4) *Za kilka miesięcy **idę***_{1 SG. NON-PAST INDICAT. IMPERF.} *na emeryturę.* (NCP)
'In a few months **I'm going** into [my] retirement'

the profiled future event is conceptualized as an occurrence which is a matter of “how things are supposed to work” (a matter of the legal regulations in the relevant domain)

the relevant mental script of “how things are supposed to work” provides the conceptualizer with a measure of epistemic control over the relevant future event

although this event is located in the future, it is nevertheless conceptualized as almost bound to occur, a near certainty, given how the world is supposed to work

imperfective:

general validity statements

habituals

stage directions

scheduled or planned future

instructions

perfective: the profiled future process is grounded as epistemically uncertain (epistemically non-immediate); default grounding for a future process

imperfective: the profiled future process is grounded as a process over which the conceptualizer exercises a measure of epistemic control by virtue of the existence of some mental script (the process is grounded as epistemically immediate)

➤ perfective and imperfective imperatives

Kocharńska (2018)

corpus of 320 randomly selected text fragments containing 2 SG. imperatives (160 perfectives and 160 imperfectives) extracted from the PWN Corpus of Polish

each example profiles a complete single instance of a telic process, with singular participants

- inviting

(5) **Usiądź**_{2 SG.PERF. IMP.} - *elf, nie odrywając wzroku od malowidła, ruchem pędzla wskazał Geraltowi głaz* (PWN)
'**Have a seat**' – the elf, without turning his gaze from the painting, showed the stone to Geralt through a move of his brush'

neutral invitation

a certain degree of reserve

(6) *Cieszę się, że cię widzę. Właśnie o tobie myślałem. - Paweł wstał z za biurka. Podszedł do Hehego. Chwycił jego dłoń w dwie ręce i kilkakrotnie potrząsnął. - **Siadaj**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.}, **siadaj**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.} - wskazał na fioletowy fotel w kształcie opony, stojący przy szklanym stoliczku (PWN)*

'I'm glad to see you. I have been thinking about you. – Paweł got up from behind the desk. He came up to Hehe. He grasped Hehe's hand in both his hands and shook it a few times. – **Do have a seat**, [by all means] – he pointed at a violet, tire-shaped armchair close to a small glass table'

whole-hearted, enthusiastic invitation

strong emotional involvement

- advising/instructing

(7) *Jeśli chcesz nadać swoim włosom jeszcze więcej połysku,
połóż_{2 SG.PERF. IMP.} na nie nabłyszczający żel z brokatem (PWN)*
'If you want to give your hair more shine, **put** on it some hair shimmer
gel with glitter'

piece of impersonal advice/instruction in a popular magazine

no emotional involvement

- (8) *Wpada Walendziak i pyta, czy ma przyjąć tę propozycję. (...) oczywiście powiedziałem: **Bierz**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.}, to dar od Pana Boga (PWN)*
'Then Walendziak turns up and asks whether he should accept this offer. (...) Of course, I said: [Sure] **take** it, this is a gift from God'

piece of personal advice

S's strong emotional involvement

S's strong conviction that the profiled action is highly beneficial to H (the best that H can do in the relevant circumstances)

- ordering/requesting

(9) *No, **wstawaj***_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.} – *Santana kopnął mnie w bok* (PWN)
'Hey, get up – Santana kicked me in the side'

(10) ***Oddawaj***_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.} *mi dziecko – krzyknął agent, grożąc*
Darlympe'owi zabezpieczonym karabinem (PWN)
'**Give** the child **back** to me – shouted the agent, threatening Darlympe
with his locked rifle'

orders which are backed up with potential use of physical violence

- (11) **Oddaj**_{2 SG. PERF. IMP.} – *Figa z makiem.* – **Oddawaj**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.} – *Poproś.*
– *Wypchaj się.* – *To nie dostaniesz.* – *Bo pójde do twojej matki.* –
Proszę bardzo, siedzi w salonie i czeka na jaśnie panią. – **Oddawaj**_{2 SG.}
_{IMPERF. IMP.} (PWN)
'**Give it back** to me. – No way. – [I say] **give it back** to me. – Ask. – Get
lost. – Then you'll not get it. – I'll go to your mother. – You're free to go,
she's in the sitting room, waiting for your ladyship. - [I say] **give it back**
[to me].

repeated requests

S's impatience and indignation in the face of H's lack of reaction to S's prior request

S's rightful indignation (based on the belief that H has a moral obligation of some kind to comply)

- (12) *Dominiczku, bądź grzeczny, **ubieraj się*** 2 SG. IMPERF. IMP. *Znowu spóźnicie się do przedszkola (PWN)*
'Dominik-dear, be a good boy, **get dressed** [now]! You'll be late for you kindergarten classes again'

S's insistence that the profiled action is performed by H immediately

perfective: weaker psychological and/or social force

the profiled process conceptualized as epistemically less certain
and effectively less guaranteed

imperfective: stronger psychological and/or social force

the profiled process conceptualized as epistemically more certain
and effectively more guaranteed

Dickey (*to appear*):

perfective (in Russian): TEMPORAL DEFINITNESS

A situation is temporally definite if it is construed as (a) a complete whole that is (b) qualitatively different from preceding and subsequent states of affairs

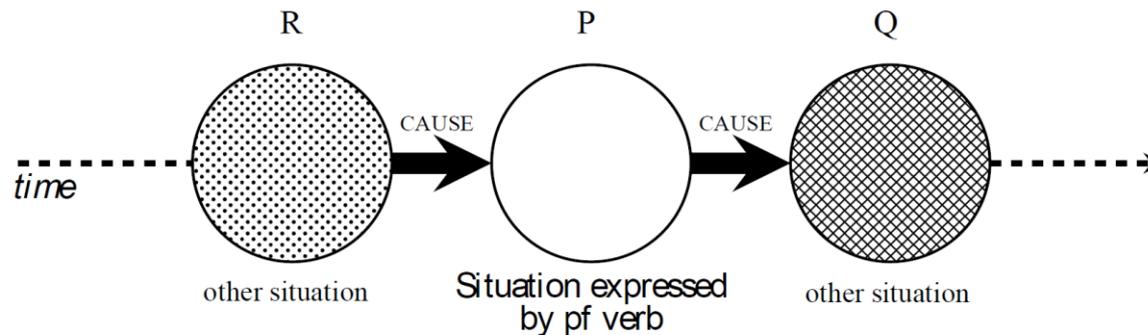


Figure 2: Basic Schema of Temporal Indefiniteness

perfective imperative: communicates a request for H to first make the choice to perform an action and then perform it with the intended outcome/result (cf. Šatunovskij 2009: 254–255)

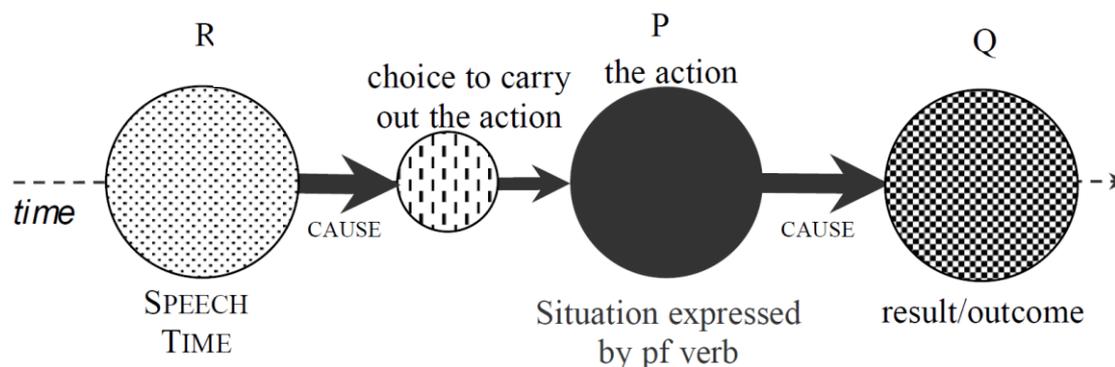


Figure 4: The Russian Perfective Imperative as an Instantiation of Temporal Definiteness

imperfective imperative: functions to avoid the content communicated by the perfective

in the context of a single action, the imperfective is employed when the the time for the choice to be made is already past

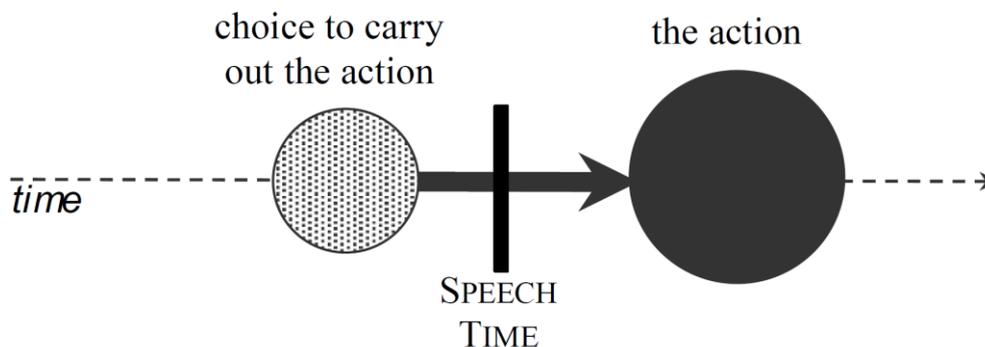


Figure 5: The Russian Imperfective Imperative Referring to a Single Event to Be Completed

two possibilities:

- at the time the imperative is uttered, the speaker knows or infers that the listener has already made the choice to perform the action
- at the time the imperative is uttered, the speaker, for one reason or another, has made the choice for the action to be performed in the place of the listener

problem (for Polish):

- (11) **Oddaj**_{2 SG. PERF. IMP.} – *Figa z makiem.* – **Oddawaj**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.} – *Poproś.*
– *Wypchaj się.* – *To nie dostaniesz.* – *Bo pójdę do twojej matki.* –
Proszę bardzo, siedzi w salonie i czeka na jaśnie panią. – **Oddawaj**_{2 SG.}
IMPERF. IMP. (PWN)
'**Give it back** to me. – No way. – [I say] **give it back** to me. – Ask. – Get
lost. – Then you'll not get it. – I'll go to your mother. – You're free to go,
she's in the sitting room, waiting for your ladyship. - [I say] **give it back**
[to me].

perfective: weaker psychological and/or social force

the profiled process conceptualized as epistemically less certain
and effectively less guaranteed

imperfective: stronger psychological and/or social force

the profiled process conceptualized as epistemically more certain
and effectively more guaranteed

- problem

(15) *Panie Józefie*_{VOC.}, **wstawaj**_{2 SG. IMPERF. IMP.!}
'Mr. Józef, **do get up!**

context: intensive care unit of a cardiologic hospital

S – a nurse

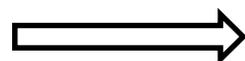
H – a patient after a very serious heart surgery; physically very weak
it is vital for increasing his chances of recovery that he should get up as
soon as possible and be able to have at least a minimal amount of
physical exercise

effect: heart-felt support for H

solidarity with H/sympathy for H's suffering

desire to help

extra directive force



imperfective

(16) *Dziewczynko*_{VOC.}, *mówię ci*, ***wstań***_{2 SG. PERF. IMP.!}
'Little girl, I tell you [to] get up'

context: St. Mark's Gospel (Mk 5, 41)

S – Jesus

H – Jairus' daughter

at the moment of the utterance she is lying in her bed already dead

S's solidarity with H/compassion for H

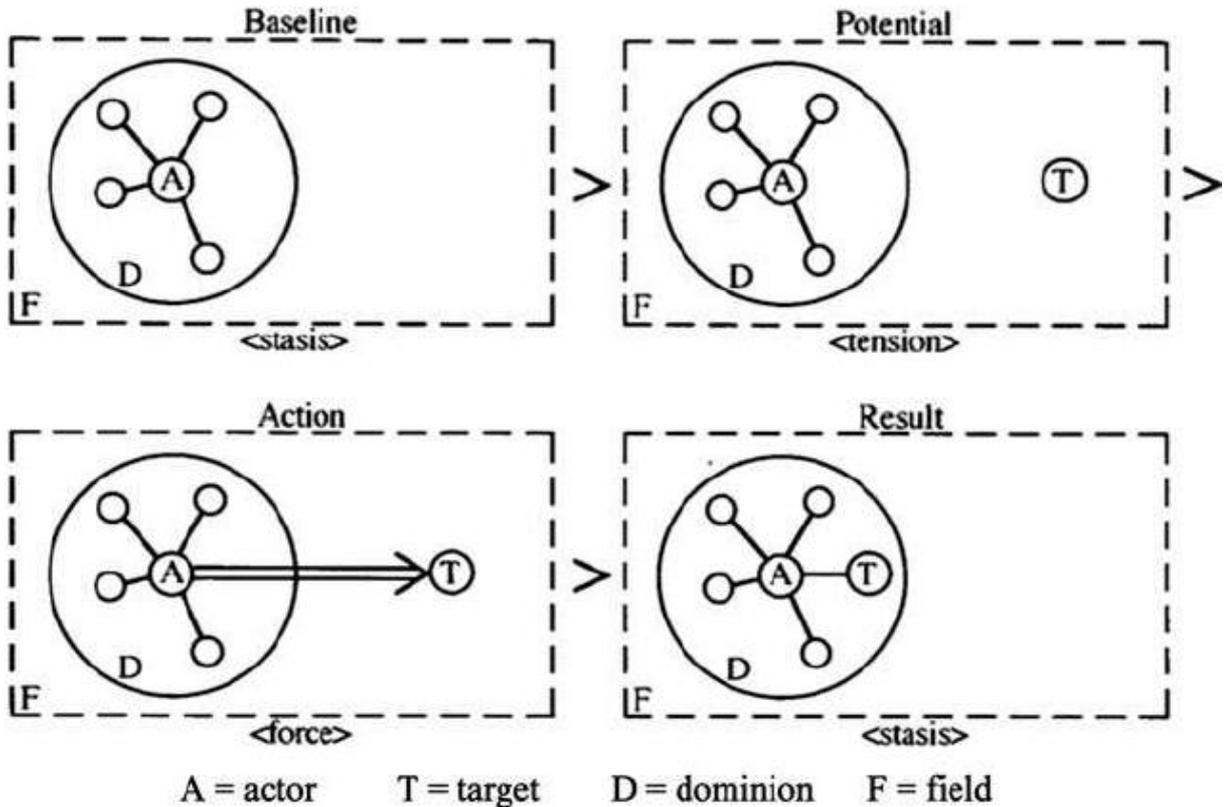
S's desire to help

nevertheless: perfective imperative is used

the world-to-word fit is guaranteed (S – the son of God)

the use of the imperfective imperative is precluded

the **control cycle** model (cf. Langacker 2002b; 2009)



epistemic control:

dominion: the set of occurrences whose epistemic status is established for the conceptualizer (real/non-real)

when the conception of an occurrence emerges within the conceptualizer's conceptual field, this brings about tension and then action towards establishing the occurrence's epistemic status

effective control:

dominion: the set of occurrences whose effective status is established for the conceptualizer (effected/non-effected)

when the conception of an occurrence emerges within the conceptualizer's conceptual field as an occurrence he wants to be effected, this brings about tension and then action towards establishing the occurrence's effective status

occurrences located in different time frames have different epistemic and effective potentials

occurrences located in the past – their epistemic and effective status is determined or determinable (facts/non-facts; effected occurrences/non-effected occurrences)

occurrences located in the present – their epistemic and effective status is in the process of becoming determined or determinable (becoming facts/non-facts; becoming effected occurrences/non-effected occurrences)

occurrences located in the future – they are potentialities, which are strictly speaking, beyond the conceptualizer's epistemic or effective control

- perfective/imperfective contrast (in non-past time frames) and the control cycle

perfective:

➤ default viewing arrangement

the profiled process is grounded as located in the future, that is, as epistemically uncertain and effectively not guaranteed

its inclusion into the conceptualizer's conception of reality and/or her dominion of effective control is not at issue

phase of stasis

➤ special viewing arrangement (in directives)

the world-to-word fit is guaranteed

(16) *Dziewczynko*_{VOC.}, *mówię ci*, ***wstań***_{2 SG. PERF. IMP.!}
'Little girl, I tell you [to] get up'

S – the Son of God

S's telling H to perform some action *automatically guarantees* that H will perform this action

no tension or striving to gain epistemic and/or effective control over the profiled process

phase of stasis

imperfective:

the profiled process cannot, as yet, be included into the conceptualizer's conception of reality and/or her dominion of effective control

nevertheless, its inclusion into the conceptualizer's conception of reality and/or her dominion of effective control is at issue

phase of tension and action

the conceptualizer is striving to achieve epistemic and/or effective control over the profiled process

present-time meaning: the profiled process is grounded as a potentiality turning into reality

future-time meaning: the profiled process is grounded as a potentiality over which the conceptualizer exercises a measure of epistemic and/or effective control by virtue of the existence of a mental script of some kind pertaining to the occurrence of this process

directive meaning: the profiled process is grounded as a potentiality over which the conceptualizer exercises a measure of epistemic and/or effective control by virtue of invoking some extra psychological and/or social force pushing H more strongly towards the realization of this potentiality

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Korpus języka polskiego PWN [PWN Corpus of Polish] (PWN); available at <https://sjp.pwn.pl/korpus>

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Thank you!